

**Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care – Prevention and Treatment Section**

Vender Education Protocol

1. Review the listing of vendors identified within your Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) Region. Utilize the listing provided to the PIHPs and indicated for this purpose.
2. Select **20%** (or the designated required amount for your PIHP region) of those vendors listed within the PIHP region to receive a personal visit by the Designated Youth Tobacco Use Representative (DYTUR) or their designee(s) during the **designated vendor education initiative time period** (this does not preclude additional Vendor Education at other times of the year). This percentage needs to be drawn from the total number of retailers/vendors within the PIHP region. During the selection process, please take into consideration sites selected for last year's vendor education initiative, as well as, new or repeat violator sites identified as part of the Formal Synar Survey and the Non-Synar compliance check process. During your identification process for selected sites you will also want to target those types of businesses known to sell tobacco to youth at higher percentage than others, such as, gas stations, bars and lounges, and restaurants. Additionally, you will want to create a limited list of alternates in the event that you encounter establishments that have gone out of business, no longer sell tobacco products, or where the manager is unavailable to speak with you.

Example: If there are 1,000 retailers/vendors within the PIHP region, **20%** of those would equal 200. If there are 700 retailers/vendors, **20%** would equal 140. For your convenience, the *FY 2007 Synar Vendor Education Numbers*, by PIHP, will be provided for you. This listing matches 20% of the number of tobacco retailers provided on OROSC's current Tobacco Retailer Master List.

3. When identifying persons to implement the retailer/vendor education activity, there is flexibility within the PIHP region with regard to who is selected for this process. Examples of possible participants for the education visits include, but are not limited to: DYTUR, local tobacco coalition members, local law enforcement personnel, and area youth. Any combination or pairing of persons that you feel would be effective is left to your discretion. Three points of caution, however, 1) do not cluster too large a group of individuals to provide the education visits (we do not wish to overwhelm the retailer/ vendor) 2) do not send a youth in by themselves - they need to be accompanied by at least one adult, and 3) make sure that those individuals who did the retailer/vendor education visit (especially the youth) are not the same as those who will conduct the formal Synar compliance check at designated retailers.

Note: If you are intending to use youth as part of your retailer/vendor education process, be sure to obtain prior written parental consent for their participation in this effort. Additionally, please provide training for this initiative in advance of the effort to ensure that the youth and adults are prepared and comfortable with their role.

4. When scheduling time to make your visits, try to be cognizant of peak business times for those establishments on your list and make every effort to avoid those times. This may not always be possible, but if you are able to do so this may increase the likelihood of having a successful visit. Peak times will certainly vary depending on the community and the type of business, but considerations of peak times might include: first thing in the morning, lunch time, when school lets out, and when work lets out.
5. When approaching retailers/vendors as part of the education initiatives, please observe the following guidelines:

- A. Upon entering the establishment, approach an available clerk and respectfully request to speak with the owner or manager. If asked, be honest about the purpose of your visit.
- B. If the owner/manager is available, promptly get to the point of your visit, so as to be respectful of their time. Explain the purpose of your visit and ask if they have a few minutes to discuss some important and useful information about tobacco sales to youth.

Note: If you are met with any anger or hostility on the part of the owner/ manager, do not persist. Thank them for their time and leave the establishment. Select another site to visit in place of that site. If the available quantity allows, you may wish to leave a packet. If not, make sure that visited establishments where you were not able to complete the education effort get a packet mailed to them.

- C. Be succinct in your discussion and presentation of the packet materials. Be prepared to walk them through the information in an organized manner, with the information of greatest importance and usefulness presented most prominently and covered early in the discussion. Some highlights to incorporate in your discussion include: the importance of complying with the Youth Tobacco Act (YTA), the posting of signs relevant to tobacco sales to minors, the necessity of checking identification, and the importance of making all clerks aware of the Youth Tobacco Act and relevant details. (See “Visit Notes” at the end of this document for details on information to be included as part of Vendor Education visits.)
 - D. Upon concluding your discussion, leave the retailer packet with the owner/manager and let them know how to contact you for further information and/or assistance, and be sure to thank them for their time.
 - E. If for any reason the owner or manager is not available, inquire as to whether the clerk is available for a brief discussion. If so follow the protocol as if speaking with the owner/manager. If the clerk is not available be sure to thank them for their time and proceed to an alternate site.
6. Continue with this process until you have completed your region’s designated number of retailer/vendor education site visits. You may exceed your designated number of sites and conduct additional Vendor Education visits if you desire.

Visit Notes: Entering an establishment and merely leaving a packet with a clerk or owner/manager is not considered a successfully completed retailer/vendor education visit. A successful visit is a dialogue inclusive of the Do Your Part brochure which includes:

- the Youth Tobacco Act and the potential cost for selling tobacco to minor
- tips for employee training
- examples of store policy regarding tobacco sales that vendors can use
- examples of directives to employees
- examples of employee agreements
- instructions on YTA signage and the placement of signage
- discussion on the Smart Tobacco Vendors Guidelines